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Varia

In Pursuit of Peace: Zhou Gengsheng's Internationalism after the World Wars

Hiroki MORIKAWA

ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the internationalism of Zhou Gengsheng, an expert in international law in twentieth century China. The Fourteen Points, stated by US President Woodrow Wilson, advocated the abolition of secret diplomacy, reduction of armaments, partial approval of the self-determination of nationalities, and the establishment of the League of Nations, initially received unanimous praise in China. However, the praise and expectations of Chinese intellectuals deflated rapidly, as China had difficulty in recovering the Shandong concession from Germany due to the resolute opposition of Japan at the Paris Peace Conference. It is well known that the significant disappointment caused by the conference led to the May Fourth Movement, which followed soon after. Even so, the expectations and support for international cooperation were strong, even after the conference. Some intellectuals thought that China and the rest of the world should proceed to establish a new international order based on international cooperation. Zhou Gengsheng was one of those vocal proponents. He was hopeful that the League of Nations would play a main role in the process of establishing this order. Although he also admitted the potential defects of the League, such as giving priority to the interests of the most powerful members, he firmly believed that internationalism was one of the inevitable trajectories of history, and he still asserted that the League was essential for achieving international cooperation, even after the Mukden Incident. After World War II, Zhou still believed in internationalism and held ardent hope for the United Nations fulfilling such international cooperation.

KEYWORDS: Zhou Gengsheng, peace, Internationalism, the World Wars, the League of Nations

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Introduction

The world experienced two world wars in the twentieth century, both of which resulted in unprecedented damage. As a result of these wars, the human race was largely convinced to pursue peace, and to construct mechanisms that could ensure the manifestation of peace. This hope and subsequent efforts toward peace also appeared in China. Some researchers have paid attention to this theme and shed light on the activities of Chinese diplomats, as well as the influence that the League of Nations exerted on the Republic of China in particular.¹ However, research on the trend of international cooperation which aroused the hope and effort of the Chinese people has been limited. Japanese and English studies have tended to solely point out the disappointment at the actual circumstances of international cooperation after World War I. These studies have underestimated the positive impact that the trend of international cooperation has had on China.² Studies in Chinese have displayed the same tendency. Although the quality of China's research into modern history has remarkably improved in recent decades, it is difficult to determine whether or not the study of this theme will become popular in mainland China.³ Still, the significance of understanding how the people of China have desired and achieved peace, and how the trend of international cooperation sustained China cannot be overstated. There are a number of Chinese intellectuals who have written on this subject, and consequently it is difficult to comprehensively study the entire gamut of their work. Therefore, this paper focuses specifically on the work of Zhou Gengsheng.

Zhou Gengsheng was born in Changsha, Hunan province in 1889. His original name was Zhou Lan.⁴ Although he came from a poor family, he was offered a government scholarship due to his excellent academic record at school, and began to study in Japan in 1905.

¹ For the activities of the League in China, see Chang Li, *Guoji hezuo zai Zhongguo: Guoji Lianmeng jiaose de kaocha, 1919–1946*. For the relationship between the League and the Beiyang government, see Tang Qihua, *Beijing zhengfu yu Guoji Lianmeng, 1919–1928*.

² Some works focused on the positive impacts, examined its contents and offer valuable information for further research. See, Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*; Yoshizawa Seiichiro, “Kori to kyoken: minkoku hachinen no kokusai kankei ron”; Alison Adcock Kaufman, “In Pursuit of Equality and Respect: China's Diplomacy and the League of Nations.” Unfortunately, none of them referred to the texts of Zhou Gengsheng. Consequently, there remains some issues in using the materials.

³ Some exceptional works shed light on the positive impact of the trend of international cooperation. For example, Luo Zhitian used various materials which were not referenced by Japanese and English studies. These materials gave a detailed examination of arguments supporting international cooperation. See, Luo Zhitian, “Lixiang yu xianshi: qingji minchu shijie zhuyi yu minzu zhuyi de guanlian hudong.”

⁴ For Zhou Gengsheng's career, see Zhou Rusong “Zhou Gengsheng xiansheng zhuanlüe.”

He enrolled in Waseda University and studied political science, law, and economics. At the same time, he joined the Tongmenghui, a revolutionary association led by Sun Yat-sen. After returning to China, he continuously engaged in revolutionary activities to overthrow the Qing Dynasty. In the Republic of China, he strongly opposed the authoritarian political leadership that Yuan Shikai promoted, and started propaganda to overthrow it. Because of this, he could not stay in China and fled to the United Kingdom to study in 1913 as an exile, changing his name to Zhou Gengsheng. In Scotland, he enrolled at the University of Edinburgh where he majored in political science, law, and economics and obtained a master's degree. Subsequently, Zhou Gengsheng moved to the University of Paris and received a PhD. He returned to China in 1921, where he began his academic life as a professor at Peking University. At the end of the 1920s, he moved to Wuhan University where he was appointed chancellor in 1945. After 1949, he chose to remain in the People's Republic of China, teaching and studying at Wuhan University and occasionally offering advice on foreign policy to Zhou Enlai as a Foreign Ministry adviser.

During the Cultural Revolution, many intellectuals received a great deal of criticism. While Zhou Gengsheng could not escape this critique, the degree to which this was experienced did not seem as serious. In his long academic life, he published many books, including: *Lingshi caipan quan* (Consular Jurisdiction) (1923), *Jindai ouzhou waijiaoshi* (Diplomatic History in Modern Europe) (1927), *Zuijin guoji zhengzhi xiaoshi* (A Short History of International Politics) (1929), *Guoji zhengzhi gailun* (An Introduction to International Politics) (1930), *Xiandai guojifa wenti* (International Legal Problems in the Modern World) (1931), *Guojifa dagang* (A Principle of International Law) (1934), *Guojifa* (International Law) (1975), etc. As these titles show, he was an expert in international law and politics. In the People's Republic of China, he was sometimes praised as "a father of international law."⁵ Zhou Gengsheng died of illness in Beijing in 1971.

Zhou Gengsheng is a suitable focus for this study given that he is a twentieth century Chinese scholar of international law and politics. After the end of both World War I and World War II, he published many articles on the construction of peace, yet very little research has been done on his writings. In those writings, as "a father of international law," he vigorously supported the trend of international cooperation. The impact of the trend has often been overlooked in previous studies, mainly due to the malfunction of the League of Nations as mentioned below. However, many intellectuals at that time were conscious of this impact and reflected on how to achieve peace. After the 1920s, Zhou Gengsheng had consistently been at the centre of the development of international law in Republican China, and energetically advocated for international cooperation to achieve peace. Academic enquiry on Zhou Gengsheng is necessary to understand how the trend of international cooperation was

⁵ Liu Zhongmeng, "Guojifa zhi fu Zhou Gengsheng xiansheng zhuanlüe."

exerted on China. This paper will identify some characteristics of what and how those intellectuals thought by focusing on Zhou's writings.

1. Tone of Arguments after World War I

The Republic of China declared neutrality after World War I broke out in July 1914. Changes in the international situation did not however allow China to maintain this neutrality. Elite leaders argued over whether or not the country should participate in the war. The Prime Minister of the Beijing government, Duan Qirui, presented an argument for China to support Germany and stand on the side of the Entente countries. The President, Li Yuanhong, and most governor-generals of the provinces were opposed to this idea. Public opinion in China was split, but Duan Qirui finally severed diplomatic relations with Germany in March 1917, and declared war against Germany and Austria in August.⁶ Consequently, China became one of the victorious countries, furthering the movement to seek the recovery of Shandong which Japan had acquired from Germany during the war.

A speech presented by US President Woodrow Wilson in Congress in January 1918 greatly enhanced the movement in support of recovering Shandong. This speech, stating the abolition of secret diplomacy, reduction of armaments, partial approval of the self-determination of nationalities, and the establishment of international peace organizations, came to be known as the Fourteen Points. The Fourteen Points initially received unanimous praise in China.

For example, Chen Duxiu, the Dean of Humanities at Peking University and an editor of one of the representative magazines in China—*The New Youth* (*Xin Qingnian*), published another magazine—*The Weekly Critic* (*Meizhou pinglun*), just after the victory in the war. The magazine called Wilson's speech "fair" and praised Wilson as "the best man in the current world" in the magazine's first edition. Chen Duxiu rearranged Wilson's claims into two principles, stating "each country is not allowed to violate the equality and freedom of other countries", and "each country's government is not allowed to violate the equality and freedom of its people with an iron fist". Chen Duxiu voiced his approval of both of these principles. In the same article, he also stressed that during World War I, *gongli* (the universal justice) linked with these two principles defeated the *qiangquan* (the naked power). He expressed that *The Weekly Critic* would aim at "asserting the *gongli* and opposing the naked power."⁷ His belief that the relationship between countries was to be based upon *gongli*, rather than authoritarian power and invasion showed his expectations for international cooperation.

⁶ For the Republic of China entry into the World War I, see Onodera Shiro, "Chugoku nashonarizumu to daiichiji sekai taisen," pp. 187–192.

⁷ Zhiyan (Chen Duxiu), "Meizhou pinglun fakanci," p. 1.

However, expectations deflated rapidly. At the Paris Peace Conference beginning in January 1919, China was expected to naturally recover Shandong. However, due to the resolute opposition of Japan, China experienced difficulty in this regard. Japan's opposition was further supported by Britain and France. This situation was unacceptable to Chen Duxiu who lamented, "At the Paris Peace Conference, each country merely respected their own rights. *Gongli*, permanent peace, and the Fourteen Points became completely worthless." Chen severely criticized Wilson, whom he had previously praised as "the best man in the current world."⁸ He said that since the Fourteen Points, which describe Wilson's plan for peace, represent an ideal that can never be fully realized, Wilson is nothing more than a "big boaster."⁹ This type of sentiment prevailed across China, particularly among students in urban areas. It is well known that this negative response led to the May Fourth Movement, which occurred soon after.

Amid the swirling disappointment and anger, Chen Duxiu, who had begun with such great expectations for *gongli* in the beginning, indicated his great suspicions. He wrote: "If each individual and nation cannot have enough power for self-defence and simply hope that *gongli* will become accepted far and wide, relying on the mercy and help of others to survive, they will be reduced to slaves with no bravery, no honour, and no self-supporting ability." He argued that instead, "the advocacy of a strong force is needed since *gongli* alone cannot exert enough pressure on its own."¹⁰ *Gongli* must be supported by force. Eventually, Chen Duxiu took an interest in the rising Soviet Russia and proceeded to found the Chinese Communist Party. The betrayal of his expectations toward *gongli* was one of the main elements contributing to and encouraging his efforts to found the party. This betrayal caused Chen Duxiu great disappointment.

It is quite easy to find writings, such as those by Chen Duxiu, that are skeptical or critical of international cooperation. It is also a certain fact that this discourse was powerful. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that mere skepticism and negative attitudes toward international cooperation were not the predominant opinions. Expectations and support for international cooperation were still strong, even after the Paris Peace Conference. Some intellectuals thought that China and the rest of the world should proceed to establish a new international order based on international cooperation. Zhou Gengsheng was one of these supporters.

Zhou Gengsheng mainly published his articles in the *The Pacific Ocean (Taipingyang)* magazine at that time.¹¹ *The Pacific Ocean* was founded in Shanghai in March 1917. After the fifth edition of Volume 4, the journal was moved to Beijing. In June 1925, the magazine

⁸ Zhiyan, "Suiganlu Liangge hehui dou wuyong," p. 3.

⁹ Zhiyan, "Suiganlu Wei dapao," p. 3.

¹⁰ Zhiyan, "Shandong wenti yu guomin juewu: duiwai duinei liangzhong chedi de juewu," p. 1.

stopped publishing. Li Jiannong (at the time of its founding), Yang Duanliu (since Vol. 2 No. 7), and Zhou Gengsheng, and his colleagues at Peking University (since Vol. 4) were the centre of the editing team. Just like Zhou Gengsheng, Li Jiannong and Yang Duanliu were also born in Hunan province and were familiar with each other from their days as student. They also had a lot in common throughout their careers. Li Jiannong and Yang Duanliu like Zhou Gengsheng had all studied in Japan at the end of the Qing Dynasty. Upon return to China, they also engaged in the anti-Yuan Shikai speech campaign and as a result, they were forced to leave China for the United Kingdom. Li Jiannong went back to China in 1916 and began to manage *The Pacific Ocean*. Yang Duanliu and Zhou Gengsheng were still living abroad at that time, but also made contributions to the magazine. Both Yang Duanliu and Zhou Gengsheng began to more actively participate in managing the magazine after returning to China.

The authors of *The Pacific Ocean* all recognized that a significant change had been occurring in the world, even though they maintained some differences in opinion. Tao Menghe, who would soon have an esteemed position as a sociologist at Peking University offered a clever explanation for this change. According to him, the world had rushed from an era in which each country was individually self-sufficient into an era where the relationship between countries had become much closer than in the past. This closeness was evidenced by the appearance of improved modes of transport and communication such as trains, steamers, international post, and telegraphs. Since the emergence of this shift, the world began to face the following problems: "If a plague occurred in one place, it would prevail in and endanger other areas easily. If a boycott against the goods from a foreign country broke out in one place, it would influence commerce and industry in different regions and cause a disturbance in the economies of these regions. If a few countries waged war amongst themselves, the entire world would fall into disorder and each country would become unstable." The balance of power theory had existed as a framework governing the way of the world. Yet, this theory could no longer be relied upon. Certainly, holding "the balance" between nations was a military matter which was useful in order to preserve the interests of each country. However, "if each country regarded the military as a power guaranteeing peace, an excessive arms race would occur."¹² The excessive arms race naturally brought about World War I. Therefore, the world after the war could not be permitted to be regulated by the same

¹¹ For basic information on *The Pacific Ocean*, see Chen Youliang, "Liuying xuesheng yu wusi xinwenhua yundong: yi taipingyang zazhi wei zhongxin"; Morikawa Hiroki, "Taiheiyō zasshi to wahei no tsuikyū: goshi zengo ni okeru kokunai chitsujō ron to kokusai chitsujō ron." For its view of international cooperation, see Chen Youliang, "Wusi zhishi fenzi de guoji zhuyi guan: Taipingyang yu weierxun zhuyi"; Zheng Dahua and Wang Min, "Ouzhan hou zhongguo zhishijie dui jianli guoji lianmeng de sikao: yi taipingyang zazhi wei zhongxin de kaocha."

¹² Tao Lügong (Tao Menghe), "Wanguo lianmeng jiqi cunzai zhi liyou", pp. 1-6.

balance of power theory that had preceded the conflict.

What theory should people rely on to manage the world following such a devastating global conflict? Zhou Gengsheng unequivocally explained this point. He called attention to the fact that an “idea of social and mutual aid (*Qunxing gongji zhi sixiang*)” had spread gradually in Europe since the late nineteenth century. This belief in social and mutual aid for humanity “acknowledged the significance of social and mutual aid between the strong and the weak. It did not allow for the survival of the fittest and neither did it yield to natural selection. Rather it granted each individual the opportunity for survival.”

Building cooperation and eliminating struggle were therefore the key features of this philosophy. The philosophy was regarded as internationalism (*guoji zhuyi*) and applied as a framework to regulate international relations. The influence of internationalism was much stronger following the rise of Wilson. In the Fourteen Points, President Wilson advocated for the self-determination of peoples and the formation of the League of Nations as a means of achieving internationalism.¹³ Zhou Gengsheng claimed that given the times, the League of Nations which would embody internationalism, should be responsible for governing the world.

A noteworthy fact is that Zhou Gengsheng did not praise the League of Nations. He actually complained unreservedly: “Many people see the League of Nations with their own eyes and feel greatly disappointed. I am one of them as well.”¹⁴ Furthermore, in a meeting held in Paris, he strongly demanded the full return of the Shandong concession and the full elimination of the Twenty-One Demands,¹⁵ clearly displaying resentment against the peace treaty, in a similar way to Chen Duxiu.

That being said, Zhou Gengsheng also asserted that his “confidence in the principle of the League remains undiminished even now.”¹⁶ The League certainly had serious problems. Among these challenges were the enactment of specific plans and the establishment of organizations that were unable to meet the hopes of the people around the world. There was the desire for a much more effective international organization to replace the League in the future. At the same time, Zhou Gengsheng paid attention to one fact: “As Rome was not built in a day, the realization of such a complete international organization is not as easy as it sounds.”¹⁷ He clearly understood the difficulty in founding a perfect international organization. Therefore, he would continue to advocate for the League, which was “a fait accompli” and “playing more or less important functions in world politics.”¹⁸ The reason why Zhou

¹³ Gengsheng, “Wanguo tongmeng zhi sanda yiyi,” pp. 5–6.

¹⁴ Zhou Gengsheng, *Wanguo lianmeng*, p. 1.

¹⁵ “Bali zailiu huaren kaihui ji.”

¹⁶ Zhou Gengsheng, *Wanguo lianmeng*, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Gengsheng strongly supported the League, even though he expressed some reservations, was connected with his study. For instance, one of his books *International Legal Problems in the Modern World* referred to works of Lassa Francis Lawrence Oppenheim, Frederick Pollock, James Wilford Garner and James Brown Scott. Those scholars were in favor of and promoted international cooperation and the authority of the League.¹⁹ It was completely natural that Zhou Gengsheng, who was fond of reading their works, upheld the League.

It is hard to answer whether or not the League could have subsequently undergone steady development. At that time in China, expectations for the League became lower and lower, never rising again. For example, the Republic of China had lost the seat of the non-permanent members of the Council from 1923 to 1925 due to defeats in the elections of the Assembly. With the League giving priority to the interests of the same powers since its establishment, the loss of seats led not only to harsh opinions and insistence upon the withdrawal from the League, but also led to severe calls for the abolition of the League itself.²⁰ However, such severe criticism was not solely the primary tone regarding the League. Some intellectuals complained that negative evaluation of the League was an error and asserted that the existence of it was essential for achieving international cooperation. In *The Pacific Ocean*, important and influential articles supporting internationalism consistently appeared. Among these articles were publications from Zhou Gengsheng aimed at highlighting the necessity of the League.

2. Internationalism after the Mukden Incident

The outbreak of the Mukden Incident in September 1931 almost destroyed the existing support for internationalism, and critically marred the prestige of the League of Nations. The series of events, including the mediation by the League after the incident broke out and Japan's withdrawal from the League (both of which caused the secession of Manchuria), did not bring about satisfaction to the Chinese people. In addition, the 1934–1935 invasion and annexation of Ethiopia by Italy occupied a great deal of attention from the Chinese people, and it was noted that the League had no power to obstruct Italy from its actions. In essentially bypassing the regulations of the League, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain promoted the appeasement policy to achieve peace with the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia in the mid-1930s. These occurrences were enough to erode the authority of the League.

As distrust of the League spread wider, some intellectuals began to denounce the helplessness of diplomacy that was centred on expectations and confidence in the League by

¹⁹ For those scholars, see Shinohara Hatsue, *US International Lawyers in the Interwar Years: A Forgotten Crusade*, pp. 12–63.

²⁰ Wang Kaiji, “Guoji lianmeng gai si.”

referring to the concept as idealism diplomacy. This form of diplomacy was seen to be powerless. Increased attention was paid to the form of diplomacy being practiced by Germany, Italy, and Japan, which was termed as realism diplomacy. This emerging form of diplomacy resulted in a decline in the League's authority, and intellectuals asserted that China should also promote such diplomacy. Under these mounting pressures, the appeasement policy of Chamberlain was evaluated as ingenious diplomacy that prevented Britain from entering into conflict with Germany and Italy. This assisted in avoiding a large war again, and the League was regarded as useless and obsolete.

Such evaluation however, was not applicable in the view of Zhou Gengsheng. In his view, realism diplomacy was nothing more than speculative diplomacy. Under the circumstances, international interests would always vary. Realism diplomacy solely emphasized the individual country's interests, abandoned treaty obligations, downplayed laws and justice, and would "never hesitate to make the attitude of today's challenge the attitude of the day before." It was only the powers with force that could practice realism diplomacy based on the "speculative" principle. If a weak country that was lacking in force, such as China, attempted to practice realism diplomacy, it could be harmful to the country.²¹

Rejecting realism diplomacy, Zhou Gengsheng longed for idealism diplomacy: "the trust in the League of Nations, the deference to the treaty, and the support to collective security."²² Zhou Gengsheng also clearly understood that expectations for the League were being greatly reduced, as the authority of the League continued to be damaged. Nevertheless, he was never shaken in his support for idealism diplomacy.

Zhou Gengsheng's perspective was sustained by his belief in "civilized human society," and that ideas such as the basic principles of right or wrong and common justice were more influential than any other principle. From this point of view, he concluded that "national policies and actions violating the *zeitgeist* of this kind will ultimately face indefensible resistance in the world."²³ It appeared that powerful and aggressive nations were able to downplay the League of Nations without considering the pursuance of collective security. However, according to Zhou Gengsheng, the "strongest nations in history," such as Napoleon's France and Wilhelm II's Germany, eventually collapsed as both of them had neglected the "*zeitgeist* of international society." Therefore, the approach of powerful and aggressive nations was not as firm as believed by some, and would be even less applicable for a weak and encroached-upon nation like China. If such a nation disregarded the collective security or the League and relied on realism diplomacy, it would be choosing "suicide diplomacy."²⁴

²¹ Zhou Gengsheng, "Xianshi zhuyi waijiao chaoliu xia de zhongguo waijiao fanglüe."

²² Zhou Gengsheng, "Lixiang waijiao yu xianshi waijiao," p. 3.

²³ Zhou Gengsheng, "Waijiao shang jizhong cuowu de kanfa," pp. 2-3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

If China promoted realism diplomacy, what kind of situation would occur? If, under realism diplomacy, the Republic of China tolerated the behaviour of Germany and Italy as the United Kingdom did, China would inevitably lose international sympathy and damage its self-position. Additionally, China would not necessarily obtain any new interests or assistance from Germany and Italy. While it was certain that China would lose other interests, it had little possibility of obtaining new benefits.

As realism diplomacy would result in the problems outlined above, one option that China could choose was “collective security based on the *zeitgeist*,” which was being advocated through “idealism,” i.e. constructing peace through the League of Nations. For Zhou Gengsheng, it was collective security that was “after all, the ideal system of world politics.” He believed that the “ideal system was not only important in the establishment of world peace, but was also one of the most powerful security systems for the safety of China.”²⁵ It can be said that Zhou Gengsheng’s views in this regard reflected the internationalism he proposed after World War I.

It is easy to dismiss the internationalism and the idealism diplomacy that Zhou Gengsheng advocated as being too ideal. Also, the realism he was censuring was assumed that power, in addition to ideals, was to be considered in international politics. It was not simply about supporting Germany and Italy, as Zhou Gengsheng asserted. Zhou Gengsheng consequently advanced his argument forcibly to strengthen his claims. This was prompted by his fervent belief that the concept dismissed as idealism was much more realistic for weak countries such as China. He posited that it would be quite dangerous to abandon the League of Nations or the ideal it embodied in the name of realism. Zhou Gengsheng’s position was also underpinned by his analysis of the international situation.

Zhou Gengsheng’s position can be further understood through an evaluation of the realism diplomacy of Chamberlain. A representative aspect of Chamberlain’s realism diplomacy is the appeasement policy. Zhou Gengsheng directed Chinese readers to pay attention to whether or not the appeasement policy would reach its predetermined purpose. Zhou Gengsheng believed that US President Franklin Roosevelt showed a clear attitude of anti-aggression and anti-dictatorship, defending treaties and democracy, and trying to cooperate with the democratic nations to rebel against the violent rule of the world. Roosevelt’s policy was affecting the diplomacy of the United Kingdom and France. Based on this perspective, Zhou Gengsheng explained his outlook on international relations. The United Kingdom, France, and the United States would form the democracy groups. They would join forces with the Soviet Union, all of whom would support the League of Nations. It would be possible and feasible for them to support collective security and resist the aggressor countries, with China also upholding this policy. Zhou Gengsheng surmised that the realism diplomacy

²⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

of Chamberlain would result in failure, and the idealism diplomacy that was sustained by *gongli* would supersede it. The opinions of Zhou Gengsheng were not isolated in Republican China. In fact, quite a few intellectuals advocated the same opinions. Hu Shi was a representative figure among them. In *The Independent Critique* (*Duli pinglun*), he appealed to public opinion that using force against Japan was a terrible mistake, and prohibiting Japan from invading China through the mediation of the League was the only reasonable course.²⁶

3. Internationalism after World War II

Zhou Gengsheng expressed confidence in internationalism after World War II, just as he had done after World War I. After the end of the World War II, there were various perspectives on and responses to the international situation in China. Briefly summarized, it can be said that three schools of thought appeared at the time. The first, mainly was mainly propagated by the Kuomintang, and involved strengthening cooperation with the United States and the United Kingdom. Some intellectuals that kept their distance from KMT China also espoused this line because of a strong sense of caution towards the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union in the secret agreement signed at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, had been approved to ensure the rights and interests in Manchuria in exchange for waging war against Japan. This fact became known to the Chinese people soon after the end of the war and they were strongly opposed to it.

The second school of thought was advocated by the Chinese Communist Party and the intellectuals close to the Party. These persons cautioned against cooperation with the US and emphasised friendly relations with the Soviet Union. The third school of thought placed importance on cooperation with the two major powers, the US and the Soviet Union. The line was pursued by some members of the China Democratic League, who relentlessly criticized Kuomintang and showed favor towards the Chinese Communist Party. A representative figure among them, Zhang Dongsun, who once served the grand secretary of the China Democratic League, asserted China should be the “bridge” between the US and the Soviet Union, to ease international tensions and promote international cooperation.²⁷

Zhou Gengsheng chose the third line, even though he was not a member of the China Democratic League. He considered that to attain peace, China needed to establish a cooperative relationship with the US and the Soviet Union, rather than relying on either country alone. He hoped that the newly founded United Nations would achieve collective security. It

²⁶ He wrote many articles on this theme. As an article highly representing his support towards the League, see Hu Shi, “Guolian hai keyi taitou.”

²⁷ For Zhang’s this idea, see Morikawa Hiroki, *Seironka no kyoji: chukaminkoku jiki ni okeru shoshisho to chotoson no seiji shiso*, pp. 199–200.

is evident that he was still committed to internationalism after World War II. Yet, given the failure of the League of Nations in the recent past, he also imposed a new condition on the United Nations—the establishment of a cooperative relationship between the US and the Soviet Union. In his perspective, unless the two powers united their efforts to uphold the United Nations, the achievement of peace in international society would never succeed.²⁸

However, the situation that emerged after World War II was obviously different from that of World War I in certain respects. One of the most remarkable points was the practical use of nuclear power and weapons. The world was asked to seriously consider this weapon. Zhou Gengsheng was quick to react on this point. In his view, this new situation had changed diplomacy entirely. For example, if nuclear weapons had emerged much earlier, the US would never have encouraged cooperation with the Soviet Union in waging war on Japan. Additionally, the US would have never transferred interests that should have originally belonged to China to the Soviet Union in the secret agreement at the Yalta Conference. Nuclear weapons might cause similar changes in the future.

With nuclear power having the potential to alter diplomatic processes, Zhou Gengsheng presented a countermeasure that was still based on internationalism. He was particularly hopeful that the activities of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission which was founded by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution in January 1946 would be effective. This commission was created for the safe and peaceful use of nuclear power and the eradication of nuclear weapons.

In December 1946, the US presented the Baruch Plan to the commission. The plan suggested the establishment of an international inspection system for the management of nuclear power and nuclear weapons. For such an establishment, stated members of the United Nations Member States would be required to ratify the related treaty. The specific contents of the treaty were that an international organization for the management of nuclear power was to be founded in the United Nations; its activities were not allowed to be affected by the veto of the permanent members of the Security Council; representatives of this organization were entitled to freely inspect the territory of ratified countries; and that the manufacture of nuclear weapons was to be strictly prohibited.

However, the Soviet Union abstained from voting on the Baruch Plan. The plan never provided any results itself. Yet, Zhou Gengsheng argued that the principle underlying the plan, and the development of an international organization tasked with the management of nuclear power were quite reasonable and indispensable. He also claimed that “from the standpoint of world peace, we do hope that the United States and the Soviet Union find some form of agreement, the United Nations adopt proposals described in the plan, and the U.N. members carry them out faithfully.” He also asserted that by modifying the Baruch Plan to

²⁸ Zhou Gengsheng, “Jiti anquan xu,” pp. 1–3.

take the Soviet Union's position into consideration more favorably than before and to achieve agreement between the two superpowers, the proposals outlined above became more effective²⁹.

It is easy to criticize Zhou Gengsheng's thinking as too idealistic. Indeed, it seems that he himself was well aware that it was too idealistic, yet the position he took when he discussed international politics can still be considered as being realistic. Zhou had predicted that Chamberlain's appeasement policy would reach a deadlock before the policy actually failed to maintain international peace. The quick consideration of the degree to which nuclear weapons would affect international politics can also be considered as evidence of the realistic nature of Zhou Gengsheng's views. Additionally, he warned of the need for the US to earnestly commit to the reconstruction of Japan and Germany, both of whom were defeated in World War II, in order to disconnect the two countries from the Soviet Union and build a bulwark for the US. He realized that such a situation would become a huge obstacle for US-Soviet cooperation and world peace. In China at that time, some intellectuals firmly asserted that reconstruction assistance for Japan and Germany by the United States was very limited and was not intended to significantly restore the power of the two countries.³⁰ Zhou Gengsheng regarded it as an error. It can be said that his understanding is much closer to the actual situation that subsequently followed.

Conclusion

Because he had been almost invariably standing for internationalism, it could be argued that there was no significant change in Zhou Gengsheng's thought after the two world wars. However, the establishment of the People's Republic of China largely transformed his argument. His representative work in the People's Republic of China, *International Law*, is an illustration of this change.

In Chapter 11 of this book, Zhou Gengsheng discussed international organizations, typified by the League of Nations and the United Nations. By and large, he found international organizations to be a negative construction: "Those organizations are an important form of international cooperation, yet also a place giving rise to sharp international conflicts. In particular, imperialists and reactionaries in each country are abusing their positions to steer international organizations, interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and violating their sovereignty. As a result, international organizations inevitably cause various conflicts within themselves and lead to strong opposition from outside."³¹ The League of

²⁹ Zhou Gengsheng, "Guoji zhengzhi yu yuanzheneng," p. 3.

³⁰ Ouyang Junxi, "Lishi yao chongyan ma?: 1948 nian de Zhou Gengsheng Hu Shi zhi zheng jiqi yiyun."

Nations, he complained, could not suppress the Manchurian Incident and the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Germany, and was also continuously hostile to the Soviet Union. It is difficult to find any evaluation based on internationalism. The United Nations was given a similar negative assessment. He denounced the principle of non-interference in internal affairs stipulated in the UN Charter as being trampled by imperialists and “reactionaries in each country.” He expressed strong dissatisfaction with “the international law theory of the Western capitalist class “due to their “defending” of such illegal situations.”³²

It can be said that Zhou Gengsheng liquidated internationalism at this phase. Several factors are associated with his decision to do so. First, the breadth of speech that was allowed to intellectuals such as Zhou Gengsheng in the People’s Republic was very narrow. As a result, the possibility of advocating collective security that also encompassed the Western countries was exceedingly low. Second, in the People’s Republic, intellectuals themselves voluntarily abandoned their past discourse which was mostly derived from the Western World, and assisted in spreading the discourse to uphold the Chinese Communist Party. In particular, Zhou Gengsheng believed that the US forces in the Korean War used biological weapons and severely denounced this use as “a barbaric act threatening all civilized human beings.” He most likely held fierce resentment against the US.³³

One cannot reject the view that great powers continue to intervene in other countries under the guise of the United Nations. As Zhou Gengsheng himself pointed out, this characteristic also applied to the League of Nations. In the past, Zhou Gengsheng persistently supported the idea of international organizations, despite their various negative features. However, the hope that international law would provide new possibilities was also disregarded as “the international law theory of Western capitalist class”, with the new international law based on “progressive socialism” subsequently replacing it.³⁴ For Zhou Gengsheng, new international law that liquidated internationalism would become much more advanced. This is as the negative side of traditional international law which primarily offered assistance to imperialism and the Western capitalist class could be overcome through new legislation. The international law that he re-imagined by Zhou Gengsheng contained what he believed to be various advancements.

Certainly, the peace and international cooperation pursued by Zhou Gengsheng were highly affected by theories on international politics, and also by the laws of the US and the UK. Under the theories, great powers including the US and the UK were often allowed to

³¹ Zhou Gengsheng, *Guojifa*, vol. 2, p. 687.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 700.

³³ Zhou Gengsheng, “Meiguo qinlüzhe jinxing xijunzhan bing qinfan woguo lingkong de falü zeren,” pp. 5–7.

³⁴ Zhou Gengsheng, *Guojifa*, vol. 2, p. 55.

promote their own interests on one hand, while on the other hand the existence of weak countries might not be taken into account. The new international law would aim to completely overcome such failures. However, as shown by the severe conflict between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic, new international law could not necessarily overcome all of these failures. Therefore, the decision to firmly support the Anglo-American international law was fully understandable. Despite recognizing its failures, he would take a chance on international cooperation exhorted by the Anglo-American international law after the World Wars. Nevertheless, completely rejecting it under the regime of the People's Republic seemingly sacrificed many possibilities for overcoming failures and achieving international cooperation.

Glossary

- Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀
Duli pinglun 獨立評論
Duan Qirui 段祺瑞
gongli 公理
Guojifa 國際法
Guojifa dagang 國際法大綱
Guoji zhengzhi gailun 國際政治概論
guoji zhuyi 國際主義
Hu Shi 胡適
Jindai ouzhou waijiaoshi 近代歐洲外交史
Li Jiannong 李劍農
Li Yuanhong 黎元洪
Lingshi caipan quan 領事裁判權
Meizhou pinglun 每週評論
qiangquan 強權
qunxing gongji zhi sixiang 群性共濟之思想
Taipingyang 太平洋
Tao Menghe (Tao Lügong) 陶孟和 (陶履恭)
Xiandai guojifa wenti 現代國家問題
Xin Qingnian 新青年
Yang Duanliu 楊端六
Yuan Shikai 袁世凱
Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀
Zhou Enlai 周恩來
Zhou Gengsheng (Zhou Lan) 周鯁生 (周覽)
Zuijin guoji zhengzhi xiaoshi 最近國際政治小史

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